

providers, while engaged in a national franchise as proposed by the bill would be required to pay each franchise authority six percent of their gross revenues as a fee to support use of local rights-of-way and local Public Education Government channels. This payment was seen as an unfunded mandate.

However, under all franchise agreements across the country, companies are required to pay this type of fee in some form. It is not something newly mandated. I believe that the bill merely continues, and in most estimates, could exceed, the current flow of money from cable providers to local franchise authorities. In doing this, I believe the bill's authors intended to make sure that cities would not lose revenue they counted on from local franchise agreements, and I fully support that cause.

Due to this, I would have supported the opportunity to consider H.R. 5252, so that a true debate could continue on the underlying provisions of the bill.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 13, 2006*

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I was inadvertently detained and missed rollcall votes No. 251–254. Had I been present I would have voted “aye” on each.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER  
AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT  
ON H.R. 4939, EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE, THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, AND HURRICANE RECOVERY, 2006

SPEECH OF

### HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 12, 2006*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I will vote for this defense supplemental without hesitation, but with a number of concerns.

As I've said in the past, I opposed the resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq because I thought President Bush's decision to begin military action in Iraq was premature. I thought it would have been better to allow more time for other measures, including coercive inspections, to accomplish the goal of disarming Saddam Hussein. However, Congress—by adopting the resolution authorizing the use of force—left it to the President to decide if and when military action would begin.

But with our troops still in the field, actively engaged in operations that Congress has authorized, we have an obligation to fund those operations. I won't make our soldiers the victims of my regrets by failing to support this bill to provide them what they need to carry out those operations.

It's too bad the Republican leadership evidently didn't see the urgency in getting this funding to our troops to pay for key equipment and benefits. The president requested this funding back in February, but somehow the Republican leadership couldn't get it done until

now. In the interim, the Army was forced to cut back on ordering spare parts and supplies and freeze civilian hires, among other constraints.

So I'm glad we're finally focusing on this legislation today, which includes funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as funding to train and equip the military and police forces of those countries. I'm pleased that the conference report funds more up-armored Humvees, provides nearly \$2 billion to procure and develop countermeasures to prevent improvised explosive device attacks on our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and funds the recently enhanced \$100,000 death benefit for soldiers' families.

I'm also pleased that—more than 9 months after Hurricane Katrina struck—the conference report includes funding for levee improvements and for Community Development Block Grants for the Gulf Coast States. The report also includes important funding for pandemic flu preparedness and for border security.

I do have strong concerns about some things that are in this conference report and some things that were left out.

I am disappointed that it does not include the additional funds that the Senate approved for work to reduce the increased danger of severe wildfires in Colorado forests caused by prolonged drought and insect infestations.

After the Senate acted, I wrote the House conferees to point out that these factors have raised to emergency levels the risk to our communities. I noted that hazardous-fuel reduction projects can reduce that risk, and our State has hazardous fuels projects waiting to be implemented but lacking adequate funding to do so. Unfortunately, the conferees did not include in the conference report the Senate-passed increase to the National Forest System to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires and mitigate the effects of widespread insect infestation.

I am also disappointed that the conference report does not include language prohibiting permanent military bases in Iraq. The House-passed bill contained a provision that I supported—H. Amdt. 750—which would ensure that no funds in the bill would be used to enter into a base agreement with the government of Iraq. The Senate-passed bill also contained a similar amendment—S. Amdt. 3855—which would prohibit funds to establish permanent military bases in Iraq or to exercise control over the oil infrastructure or oil resources of Iraq.

But the conference report includes neither version of this language, which I find baffling, since the clear will of both bodies was expressed through the passage of these amendments. Policymakers and experts across the political spectrum agree that the U.S. should make clear that it does not seek a permanent military presence in Iraq. GEN. George Casey has testified that gradually lowering the visibility of U.S. troops will remove one of the elements fueling the insurgency. And Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has testified that, “We have no desire to have our forces permanently in that country. We have no plans or no discussions under way to have permanent bases in that country.” I believe that Congress should have joined the administration in affirming this principle to send a clear signal to the Iraqi people that we fully support their efforts to establish democracy and exercise sovereignty.

Finally, I believe the administration must begin to take responsibility for the full cost of the war in Iraq and consider these costs through the regular appropriations process. With the enactment of this supplemental, Defense Department spending for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq will reach \$400 billion, with the majority of that provided for Iraq. Even though we are now more than 3 years into the conflict, virtually all of this money has been provided for Iraq as “emergency” funding and has not been offset. But there is no “emergency” here. So much of the costs are predictable. Instead, by funding this war through supplementals, the Bush administration avoids having to make tough choices—like raising taxes or making deep spending cuts. The American people deserve greater candor from the administration about both the predictable costs as well as the anticipated benefits of our undertakings in Iraq. I've attached a May editorial from the Rocky Mountain News that amplifies this point.

Nonetheless, as I said, I will vote for this bill without hesitation because its prompt passage is needed not just to support our men and women in uniform as they fight, but also to continue to lay the foundation for the harder mission of stabilizing Iraq.

[From the Rocky Mountain News, May 4, 2006]

#### A CRAZY WAY TO FUND THE WARS: IRAQ SPENDING IS NO LONGER AN ‘EMERGENCY’

A congressional emergency spending measure is meant to be a quick response to sudden, unexpected and generally one-time events, the Gulf Coast hurricanes being an excellent example. The emergency bills are handled outside the regular budget process and under much looser rules.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, although obviously serious, hardly qualify as emergencies in the normal sense. Yet that is how the Bush administration and Congress insist on funding them, even though we're in our fifth year on one and fourth year on the other.

The result is that Congress has a poor grip on the wars' costs and how they fit in with other competing budget priorities. And the process has allowed Congress to avoid the question of how we are going to pay for those wars.

The Senate took advantage of the urgency of the latest emergency funding bill for Iraq, Afghanistan and hurricane relief to load it up with money for Hawaiian sugar growers, a Northrop Grumman shipyard, riverbank erosion in California and farm relief, among other largesse. A \$92 billion bill is now around \$108 billion.

The wars are not going away. The president himself has indicated we are likely to be in Iraq at least another 3½ years. Its annual cost has risen from \$51 billion in 2003 to \$102 billion this year, and the meter is running at about \$9 billion a month. In a few weeks the total will surpass \$320 billion, and Congress' analysts estimate that even if troop withdrawals begin this year, a best-case scenario, the costs of a phase-out in Iraq and Afghanistan will run an additional \$371 billion.

As was done in previous wars, the expected cost of Iraq and Afghanistan should be submitted as part of the regular annual federal budget, and Congress should give it the regular line-by-line scrutiny it gives every other part of the budget. This might have prevented the squandering in Iraq of the vast sums meant for reconstruction.

Congressional researchers complain that the Pentagon has refused to give them data